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RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 0537  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0947  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0615  
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE 0172  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NOUAKCHOTT 000282

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [MR](#)

SUBJECT: DADDAH STILL IN THE ANTI-COUP CAMP; WANTS MORE US INVOLVEMENT

REF: A. NOUAKCHOTT 278

[1](#)B. NOUAKCHOTT 204

[1](#)C. NOUAKCHOTT 222

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Dennis Hankins for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In an April 19 meeting RFD President Ahmed Ould Daddah maintained his anti-coup stance, suggested the Senegalese mediation effort might be acceptable, and called for increased USG involvement. He tried to brush off the recent divisions within his party, and he still maintains that the only way President Abdallahi can return is if he resigns immediately. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Charge and PolAsst met RFD President Ahmed Ould Daddah and RFD Vice President Mohamed Abderrahmane Ould Moine April 19. Charge began by asking about the recent turmoil in the political scene, including within the RFD (Ref A, paras 3 and 4). Daddah attempted to minimize the divisions in his party, using his trademark intellectualisms to term the internal strife an "epiphenomenon." Asserting that the RFD was a "party of principles," he observed that for the first time in the 18-year history of his political party, he had had to suspend a member of the executive board (RFD Second Vice President Hamidou Baba Kane). He added that the split in the party once he clearly separated from Aziz was predictable and suggested the party was stronger for it.

[1](#)3. (C) France visit: Daddah stated that he had visited several political, government, and civil society actors on a recent visit to France. This included the Africa Director in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but not anyone at the Elysee. He "deeply regretted" the recent French statements that essentially approved the elections planned by General Aziz. He also stated that President Sarkozy's stance toward Mauritania had "greatly weakened," adding that Spain and Germany also had adopted weak positions. Nevertheless, the position of the Europeans as a whole -- i.e. the European Union -- was "very important" Daddah said. He termed as "acceptable" April 18 remarks by the French Foreign Ministry's spokesman saying that France could only support a consensual resolution and that a unilateral election strategy was, by definition, not consensual. Daddah noted the spokesman only got to that declaration after the persistent reporter hit him with multiple follow-up questions.

14. (C) FNDD cooperation: Charge asked about the level of new-found cooperation between the RFD and FNDD. Daddah paused and said it was "okay," but noted there is no web site or united platform between the two groups, which makes "structured cooperation" difficult. He did note the recent joint RFD-FNDD declaration (only the second of its kind) as a sign of the growing cooperation between the two camps. He noted that efforts to create a joint political platform were blocked over the question of Abdallahi's return, but that the two sides had decided to concentrate on areas of agreement -- i.e. opposition to Aziz.

15. (C) Return of Abdallahi: Daddah stated that there was no change in his position regarding the return of President Abdallahi since his last visit with Charge (Ref B). He said Abdallahi could only come back and "resign immediately." He also reiterated the case for his legal argument (Ref C) that Aziz could not run for president because of the African Charter and other international conventions that Mauritania had ratified.

16. (C) The "new" High State Council: Charge asked Daddah for his assessment of General Ghazouany, the new "President" of the High State Council. Abderrahmane described Ghazouany as "unassuming and intelligent" but not able to really change the situation. He was too connected to Aziz, and had an "obligation of solidarity" with him that he probably would not break. Nevertheless, Abderrahmane said external pressure could possibly influence Ghazouani to move in a more favorable direction. Daddah added that the problem is to

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"convince Ghazouany to exit with honor." Such a move, if pulled off, would be a "diplomatic coup." Regarding Aziz, Abderrahmane said he was still in charge of BASEP and the one giving them orders, while Daddah noted that although Aziz had resigned as President of the High State Council and as "head of state," he had not yet resigned his military commission. He also said Aziz was very involved with Libya, but especially Iran. When Charge asked if this warming to Iran was purely for money or out of ideology, Daddah replied: "Aziz is a military man; he has no ideology." Abderrahmane added that Aziz was probably desperate to obtain money before the June 6 elections; after that, a softening in his position could possibly occur. He also echoed figures reported in the local press that Aziz had already received \$10 million from the Iranians (as part of a reported \$2 billion total package). Comment: Two billion dollars is an awfully large amount of money; it is possible, or even probable, that the press made an error somewhere in its currency conversion figures. End comment.

17. (C) USA must act: Daddah and Abderrahmane asked when the US Embassy would release another communique, noting it had been a few weeks since the last one. Charge responded that the USG had already been quite active compared to other countries in this regard. Charge also pointed out that President Obama had recently called the situation in Mauritania "troubling." Daddah was unaware of Obama's remarks, and seemed quite pleased by them. Abderrahmane said it would be important for the U.S. (better still the EU) to come out with a clear statement saying that it did not recognize Aziz' "resignation" and the establishment of a transition presidency under the President of the Senate as offering a basis for credible elections, legitimization of the winning candidate, or the return to democracy and constitutional order. He added that the announcement of U.S. targeted financial sanctions in the next few weeks could be extremely important, adding, "if they don't come out until after the elections they won't have any value."

18. (C) Senegalese Mediation: Daddah asked Charge for his view about the Senegalese mediation effort. Charge noted that while Wade had taken pro-Aziz positions in the past, the affiliation of Ping with the process gave it some credibility. The FNDD/RFD conditions set for participation

could make them useful. Charge added he understood the FNDD was considering engaging in the Senegalese negotiations as a way of turning off (or at least dragging out) the electoral calendar and minimizing Aziz by insisting on negotiations with General Ghazwany and Senate President M'Bare -- not with General Aziz who is now "just a regular citizen." Daddah confirmed that was the general approach saying that Ghazwany could be held responsible for his position and forced to make political agreements without recourse to Aziz. He questioned whether the BASEP would really react if isolated by a political decision by Ghazwany and M'Bare -- an outcome that would avoid a "counter-coup" that Daddah recognized could lead to something worse than Aziz. Daddah said he had told Senegalese Foreign Minister Gadio that he was not comfortable with talks guaranteed only by Senegal and the African Union. Prior to Qadhafi's visit, he had seen the African Union, as a legitimate guarantor but he now feared the effectiveness of the organization was limited by Qadhafi's influence. Daddah told Gadio we wanted the negotiations to be "co-guaranteed" by the European Union and the United States and then posed a hypothetical: would the USG be amenable to participating as a "co-guarantor" in negotiations in Senegal between the three main parties to the crisis (FNDD, RFD, and the junta)? Charge demurred, noting that Washington would have to consider such a request were it to be formally posed. That said, Charge added the U.S. certainly saw the need for eventual negotiations since the idea of waiting for things to get worse until there is a counter-coup is not much of a strategy -- the combined FNDD/RFD opposition has to be seen to be looking for a peaceful solution.

19. (C) Comment: Daddah was quieter than normal in this meeting and, unlike past meetings with Charge, had an advisor

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present (Abderrahmane is a former Mauritanian ambassador to Kuwait and Senegal and seems to have a diplomatic advisor function). Daddah seems well set in his opposition to Aziz at this point. He has burned enough bridges in the past two weeks and absorbed sufficient damage to his party that he can't easily change positions again. The stubbornness of his personal opposition to Abdallahi is still there -- he seems to feel he can wean the FNDD leadership away from the President if negotiations go somewhere. Both he and the FNDD are talking about the Senegalese mediation as something they are prepared to cautiously engage in -- although their motive seems more to isolate and undermine Aziz than really negotiate a deal. The Department may want to consider U.S. involvement in the Senegalese talks -- if formally invited. The U.S., having established its strong pro-democracy credentials with the opposition -- would be the best placed to influence the FNDD (and to a lesser degree Daddah himself) if a credible deal was achievable. End Comment  
HANKINS